

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claim 27 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 11 and 19 have been amended. Consequently, claims 11-26 are pending in this application.

As an initial matter, Applicants take this opportunity to thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 27 contains allowable subject matter. In light of that indication, Applicants have amended independent claims 11 and 19 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 27, in order to place this application in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, claims 11-19 and 22-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Application Publication No. 2002-334748 (“JP ‘748”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,692,272 to Lemke et al. (“Lemke”). In addition, claims 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lemke in view of JP ‘748, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,736,676 to Zhang et al. (“Zhang”). Without necessarily acquiescing to these rejections, Applicants note that these rejections should no longer be applicable since all the rejected claims now contain allowable subject matter. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of all the outstanding rejections, and timely allowance of all pending claims 11-26.

The Office Action contains a number of statements and characterizations regarding the claims and the related art. Applicants decline to necessarily subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action, regardless of whether it is addressed above.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned (571-203-2735) if a telephone conversation might advance prosecution of the application.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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